



# S.A.F.E. Grant County Coalition

## S.A.F.E. GRANT COUNTY COALITION

### Battle of the Belts

The Safe Actions Committee set forth to attend the Strawberry Festival in Platteville in which we were to offer the "Battle of the Belts" and the Roll-over Simulator both activities promoting seat belt use. However, due to the weather neither booth was set up. So within that same week Platteville held a Party in the Park event which acknowledged volunteers in the area. Our own Dr. Lynn Verger of the Tobacco-Free Coalition was recognized that night. Carol

and her kids, Collin and Lauren attended the Party in the Park. Eventually we did have a few participants which consisted of 5 teams of 4 to complete the contest. Each participant received a lanyard which said "if you want to go far, buckle up in your car" supplied by the DOT and then the winning team received mood cups from the S.A.F.E. Grant County Coalition. Each team had to be-

gin outside the car (the car was provided by the Grant County Sheriff's Department), get into the car, and buckle as quickly as possible. The team with the best time- WON! It was fun and hopefully this event will remind them to "buckle up"!



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#### Contact Information

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## Youth Leadership Conference 2009

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On June 30<sup>th</sup>, 75 students from Grant, LaFayette and Iowa Counties attended the Southwest Wisconsin Youth Leadership Conference which took place at Bethel Horizons Adventure/Wilderness Center near Dodgeville. This Leadership Conference began with Mike McGowan who led youth through a full-day discussion on the dangers of prescription drugs, hazards of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, the importance of making good choices, and characteristics of good leaders. After, supper, a dance and karaoke was held to promote social interaction and fun. Then later, Lee Gill and Carol Thole led a discussion that evening involving high school students about healthy relationships while Kathy Marty and Tonia Wagner led the middle school students through a discussion on the hazards of drinking and driving.

On day two the students participated in team building, problem-solving activities, and the high ropes course, which was led by Bethel Horizon staff. Trained Coalition staff aided in the belaying of youth for the high ropes course. The day ended with a campfire, movies, and sharing many stories.

## Youth Leadership Conference 2009

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The third day Luke Witkowski and Amanda Krentz attended and presented FACT (Fight Against Corporate Tobacco) materials/ideas and led the youth through a “zines” activity where they designed and published their own anti-tobacco magazine, which will now be distributed to area schools and other public places for people to read. The youth learned more about advocacy and will use these ideas and techniques to combat drug and alcohol issues in their schools and communities this fall. This leadership conference is funded by the S.A.F.E Grant County, the Grant County Tobacco Free Coalition, the Lafayette County Tobacco-Free Coalition and participant fees. Kim Horst, from Iowa County also aided in planning this conference





## Election of New Officers

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From Left: Heather Ringberg, Treasurer

Bev Doll, Chair

Anna Mroch, Secretary

Congrats to Heather Ringberg and Anna Mroch who were sworn in by Bev Doll, Chair, on July 23rd as the new Treasurer and Secretary!

## The “New” Alcohol

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Cut off the flow of oxygen to the brain. Feel lightheaded. Pass out. Sounds fun, huh? Think again. “The Choking Game” is the newest drug to hit adolescents between the ages of 9-16. However, older youth and even adults have fallen victim to the “Choking Game”. A 17 year-old senior at Columbus High School recently passed away as a result of this “game.” Youth cut off the flow of oxygen to their brains with a belt, rope, or bare hands. When they release the pressure, blood that was blocked up, floods the brain all at once. This sets off a feeling of warm, fuzzy lightheadedness. In actuality, this is just the brain dying, thousands of cells at a time. If oxygen is cut off from the brain for too long the result can be brain damage, or, even death. There are many reasons kids play this risky “game.” For some the high that they experience becomes addictive, for others they think it is a safe alternative to drugs and alcohol, especially if they are trying to avoid getting caught due to an athletic code. Most of the students who play the Choking Game were active, intelligent and stable children; not reclusive and troubled. Some of the warning signs of the Choking Game include:

- \*Any suspicious mark on the side of the neck, sometimes hidden by a turtleneck, scarf, or turned-up collar.
- \*Changes in personality, such as overtly aggressively or agitated.
- \*Bloodshot eyes or any other noticeable signs of eye stress.
- \*Any questions about the effects, sensations or dangers of strangulation.

If someone you know is doing this, the best thing to do is be proactive and warn the person about the activity. Most of the time the person may be unaware that the Choking Game can kill them or leave them brain damaged. Alerting the parents and school officials so they can monitor the situation closely is very important because often times friends and siblings are also “playing” this game as well. The Choking Game is also known as Blackout, Fainting Game, Space Monkey, Dream Game, Suffocation, Roulette, Passout, Flatliner, California High, Airplaning, American Dream, Funky Chicken, Tingling, and Gasp.

For more information about the “Choking Game,” please visit, [www.thedbfoundation.com](http://www.thedbfoundation.com) or [www.stop-the-choking-game.com](http://www.stop-the-choking-game.com) or contact Kathy Marty at 608-723-1614.

## SUDN (Stop Underage Drinking Now) Projects

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**Car Chips:** One of the goals of the Coalition is to enhance safe driving. If you would like to help a new student driver become a safe and responsible driver, the Coalition's CarChip Pro Program may be of interest to you (Safe Actions Committee originally implemented this program). The CarChip Pro is like a tiny "black box" or a data logger for your vehicle. Installation is easy: plug it in (plugs into the OBD11 connector which is generally located under the dashboard on the driver's side of the car and is used to diagnose problems with your vehicle), drive vehicle, and download information. This chip can monitor speed, acceleration, hard stops, and alarms can be set to act as reminders for excessive events. The chip records information that can be downloaded onto your computer which allows you and your teen to learn from their driving experiences. Some insurance companies even offer discounts to student drivers who can prove they are responsible and safe drivers! If you are interested in learning more about the CarChip program, please contact Tonia Wagner, Stop Underage Drinking Now Coordinator (SUDN), at 608 348 2322. Interested individuals may use the chip for a period of one year. A "Waiver of Liability" form and a \$50 refundable deposit are required to assure that the CarChip is returned in working order and good condition.

**Underage Drinking Task Force:** The Underage Drinking Task Force was established in January, 2009, through a collaboration with the Grant County Sheriff's Department and the SUDN Grant. The Task Force has been involved in a number of areas including community events, additional patrols, etc. Special thanks to the Sheriff's Department for all of their time and efforts coordinating this proactive approach!

**Platteville Neighborhood Watch:** Do you live near the University of Wisconsin – Platteville and would like to get more involved in your neighborhood? If so, please contact Tonia Wagner, Stop Underage Drinking Now Coordinator (SUDN) at 608 348 2322 or Heather Ringberg, Grant County Dept. of Social Services, Community Development Associate at 608 723 2136 ext 110. Tonia and Heather are in the process of working with 5 neighborhoods around the campus area. Any input or suggestions are appreciated!

\*SUDN is a grant of the S.A.F.E. Grant County Coalition

## Upcoming Events

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- Next Coalition Meeting—Thursday September 24 at 5pm at the Southwest Health Center, Platteville
- "The Plunge"—April 15, 2010, Youth and Ag Building, Lancaster



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See inside to check out the latest news from the S.A.F.E Grant County  
Coalition!

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